

THE JEWS OF YUGOSLAVIA

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There were 76,654 Jews in Yugoslavia in 1931 (census of March 31), including between 1,000 and 2,000 First World War refugees from Poland. In addition, some 2,000 or 3,000 refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia entered Yugoslavia between 1933 and 1940. Thus the number of Jews at the time of the Nazi invasion (April 6, 1941) was about 80,000 (0.55% of the entire population). They were concentrated largely in cities: Belgrade (8,389), Zagreb (12,315), Sarajevo (8,090), Skopje, Novisad, Osijek, etc.

The Nazis established the puppet "Independent State of Croatia," where concentration camps, massacres, deportation and starvation ruthlessly destroyed about 80% of the Jews. In Serbia proper the Jews were almost all killed or deported to Poland. In Bulgarian-occupied South Serbia, all Jews were reported to have been deported by August, 1943. Where towns and cities were inhabited by people of German origin (Volksdeutsche), the Jews were mostly exterminated. The Hungarians killed about 2,500 Jews in Novisad and other cities in reprisal for participation in guerrilla warfare; in the parts occupied by Hungary (Vojvodina, Medjimurje), about 10,000 Jews were left. In Slovenia, partly occupied by Italy and partly by Germany, there were no Jews left in 1942-43. Almost no Jews remained in Yugoslav cities. According to a report via Switzerland to a South American country, some 400 Jews remained in Zagreb, Croatia (February, 1943).

Many of the Jews saved their lives by escaping to Italy or to that part of Yugoslavia occupied by Italy (the entire Adriatic coast, Dalmatia, Montenegro). Delassim, a voluntary relief organization founded originally by Italian Jews with the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee, altered its activities during the war and aided some 8,000 Yugoslav Jews on Italian territory. About 1,000 Yugoslav Jews escaped to Hungary; several hundred to Palestine. No more than 50 reached the United States between 1941 and 1943. There were about 50 in Cuba and several hundred in South American countries.

Many Jews joined the guerrillas under Draja Mikhailovich and the Partisans. Some estimates stated that about 5,000 Jews were fighting in Yugoslavia in 1942-43, but other reports cited a considerably higher figure. The Bulletin of the Yugoslav Information Center, New York, stated that there were about 15,000 Jewish guerrilla fighters. More than 1,000 officers, and a greater number of ordinary soldiers, were prisoners of war in Germany.

The position of the father in Yugoslav Jewish families differed according to religious observance and origin. In Sephardic (practicing the Spanish and Portuguese ritual) and extremely Orthodox Ashkenazic (practicing the German and Polish ritual) families, the father had much more authority than in the Neolog (modern liberal) families. Among the Sephardic and the Orthodox Ashkenazim, full obedience and devotion was paid him as the religious head of the family. This patriarchal tradition was bound up with a strict general observance of religious ceremonies and holidays.

The position of women in the southern parts of Yugoslavia did not differ from that found among Serbian non-Jewish families; 80 per cent of them were

dependent and almost entirely unemancipated. In Belgrade, however, many emancipated younger women were employed in offices, and served as teachers or physicians.

In the cities, traditional Jewish family relationships assumed the form manifested among the general population, except in the matters of religious ritual and holiday observance. In villages, family life retained a more individual character. After the First World War, most of the Jews migrated from the villages to the cities, leaving a small percentage in the provinces.

The Jewish religion was officially recognized by the state and given equal rights with other religious groups. Freedom of religion was guaranteed in the Constitution, and was strictly followed in practice by all state officials. Observance of all religious ceremonies and customs, including Shehitah (ritual slaughter) was protected by law.

The Federation of Jewish Religious Communities (Savez Jevrejskih Veroispovednih Opstina) was the official religious body, subsidized by the state, and maintaining a central office in Belgrade. In religious affairs, the Chief Rabbi represented the Federation before the government; in other matters, the president was the spokesman. The religious communities had the right to levy taxes, in the collection of which the government administrative authorities aided.

The Chief Rabbi ranked with the highest government officials, as did the religious heads of the Serbian Orthodox, Catholic and other recognized churches; he was a member of the Senate. Frequently rabbis served as teachers in the elementary schools maintained by the Jewish communities and as teachers of religion -- an obligatory subject -- in the state high schools. Religious services were conducted by the cantor, who -- in smaller communities -- also acted as shohet (ritual slaughterer) and mohel (one who performs circumcisions). Additional functionaries were the teachers in the Jewish elementary schools. The synagogue shamas (sexton) assisted at funerals and other religious ceremonies and also generally in the synagogue, as a lower-bracket employee.

Within the Jewish religious communities, there were Sephardic, Ashkenazic, extreme Orthodox (also Ashkenazic) and Neolog components. The Neologs drew their adherents from both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic groups. The 1931 census indicated the following numerical division: Ashkenazim - 47,244; Sephardim - 26,459, and extreme Orthodox - 2,951. Among the refugees from other countries there had been a few Hassidim, but they were inconsequential in the Jewish communities. Without regard to their particular ritualistic affiliations, the Yugoslav Jews observed all the Jewish holidays. The Sabbath was strictly kept by the Orthodox Jews and by many of the Sephardim.

Since the majority of Yugoslav Jews belonged to the lower middle-class, the Jewish communities did not have much wealth. In Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Novisad, Skoplje, Osijek and other centers, the Jewish communities owned some real estate, consisting of synagogue and school buildings, homes for the aged, hospitals and similar welfare institutions. The total wealth represented by these properties was perhaps between three and five million dollars.

Toward the state, the Jewish religious community had an attitude of unequivocal cooperation and loyalty. Jews participated in political life and were appreciated for their patriotism. In the Balkan War (1912-13) and in the First World War, numerous Serbian Jews became noted heroes. Skoplje, the largest city in South Serbia, has a street named after Mosha Amar, a hero in the Balkan War. Dr. Albala and Chief Rabbi Alkalay were sent to the United States during the First and Second World Wars to represent the Yugoslav cause. Although devotion to the state characterized the Jewish communities throughout Yugoslavia, it was in Serbia that the Jews were most active politically. In elections, they invariably voted for the democratic parties.

The Nazi invasion destroyed Jewish life. The occupational authorities and the puppet governments utilized the communal organizations to obtain data about the Jews and to facilitate plunder. Subsequently, the community organizations ceased to exist; their funds were confiscated. In Zagreb, Sarajevo and other cities the synagogues were demolished. Such Jews as remained in Yugoslav territory had no legal status. All Jewish organizations were dissolved. In Belgrade, the Secretary of the Federation of Jewish Communities (who was later killed), and in Zagreb, the vice-president of the Federation, Dr. Drago Rosenberg, its secretary, Aleksa Klein, and the Rabbi Dr. Shalom Freiburger, under the protection of the Archbishop, devoted all their efforts to the work of Delassim, the organization which was aiding as many Jews as possible in Italian-occupied territories.

The marriage and divorce laws of Yugoslavia, as applicable to Jews, and others, were complicated. At the end of the First World War, Yugoslavia did not invalidate such laws as had existed in the territories which were incorporated in the new state. Consequently, five separate laws concerning marriage and divorce obtained in the country. Serbia retained the old Serbian Civil Law; Croatia had an old law requiring religious marriage and divorce ceremonies; Vojvodina (Banat, Bacska) and Medjimurje, had a modern Hungarian law demanding a civil wedding and a judicial divorce; in Bosnia a special application of Austrian Civil Law and religious ceremony was practiced, and in Dalmatia and Slovenia new Austrian statutes prevailed.

After the Nazi invasion, Jewish marriages could not be publicly performed. Rabbis performed ceremonies secretly, without witnesses. Because some puppet government leaders had wives of Jewish origin, the usual Nazi practice of voiding mixed marriages was not followed. New marriages, however, between Jews and non-Jews were barred; all mixed relationships were punishable by death.

The Agunah (deserted wife) problem had no significance in Yugoslavia except among the Jews practicing the Orthodox form of ritual. Orthodox Jews do not permit the remarriage of a woman whose husband has disappeared.

There was no Din Torah (religious court of arbitration) or any other form of Jewish judiciary before or after the Hitler invasion, but in the Croatian Banat, divorce proceedings, leading to a get (Jewish divorce), had to be instituted with the Rabbi before the regular court would hand down a judgment.

Funeral customs, before the Hitler invasion, did not differ from Jewish funeral customs elsewhere. Every Jewish community had its own cemetery, and also a Hebra Kadisha (Burial Society) which provided funerals for the poor. After the invasion, Jewish cemeteries were largely desecrated, the Hebra Kadisha were dissolved and Jewish burials took place secretly and often in common graves.

Most of the Yugoslav Jews belonged to the middle-class, gaining their livelihood as small merchants, traders and white collar employees. Before the First World War, there were more Jews living as farmers and merchants in and around the villages throughout the country, but after the plundering of their properties by the dismissed remnants of the Austrian army and military deserters, most of them moved to the cities.

A class of industrialists existed, consisting of large-scale merchants and some bankers, and exercised considerable influence in the development of newly-created industries. To a great extent, Yugoslavia's economic development was aided by the initiative and enterprise of Jews. A number of Jews were employed as white-collar workers in banks and factories, but some were also civil service employees, although here they rarely rose to the higher brackets. In the free professions, Jews were more numerous.

The general aspect of the economic structure of the Jews in Yugoslavia varied regionally. In Croatia and Vojvodina, the Jews were comparatively well off, with a small proportion of poor. In Bosnia, small trading prevailed, and the standard of living was lower. In Serbia, the middle-class was strongest, but in South Serbia there was a great deal of poverty and a low standard of living.

Statistics taken in the 1930's show the following occupational distribution for the Jews in Yugoslavia as a whole: commerce, 37%; white-collar workers, 25%; handicraft, 13%; liberal professions, 8%; industry and finance, 2%; agriculture 3%; other professions, 7%; unemployed, 5%.

There were not many banks in Yugoslavia owned or controlled by Jews. Some small private banks did come under this heading, but were without influence in Yugoslav banking. Among these were the Jugoslovenski Kreditni Zavod in Belgrade, the Merkur Banka, Trgovacka Banka and the Depozitna Banka in Zagreb.

Jews were not prominent either as the owners of mines or of other natural resources in Yugoslavia, although they aided in the introduction of foreign -- mostly British -- capital into the development of Yugoslav natural resources. Several small coal mines were owned by Jews. Not long before the invasion a modern iron foundry was established in Caprag, near Zagreb, by a Jew.

The first paper mill in the country was established in Zagreb by a Jew named Friedfeld; a family named Stern founded the first and largest leather factory in the country; the Sauerbrunn family owned the first textile factory; the Alexander, Walkenfeld and Mauer families were the owners of breweries and distilleries; a large machine and railroad car factory was established by Jews in Brod (Sava) and was later taken over by the Croatian Savings Bank (Prastediona); the first electric bulb factory was established by Jews in Pancsevo, near Belgrade; a furnace, radiator and dynamo plant was founded in Petrovgrad (formerly Beeskerek). All these industries were put under the direction of Nazi commissioners after the invasion.

Before the invasion, there does not seem to have been discrimination against Jews in industry by the government or in government-owned cartels.

Yugoslav Jews participated to a significant degree in domestic commerce, especially in the timber, corn, textile and clothing trades. Later, their influence in many of these fields declined, as the result of the establishment of cooperatives for agricultural products and the centralization of export in state institutions. Only in 1940-41 did special discriminations become evident, when political nationalistic groups in the Chambers of Commerce and the Stock Exchanges succeeded in weakening the position held by the Jews in these bodies. This was especially true in Croatia.

The Nazi policy of excluding Jews from industry and commerce was efficiently carried out after the invasion with the help of the puppet governments.

In foreign trade, Jews were originally active in timber, export, and the food, grain and cattle fields. After government centralization, as mentioned above, they remained important only in timber and food commerce.

Under Nazi control, Jews in foreign trade were ousted from their firms, just as were the Jews engaged in domestic commerce.

Participation of the Jews in the economic life of Yugoslavia as employees and workers was not great, but even so the economic depression of the 1930's increased unemployment. The Jewish communities tried to meet the situation by various retraining programs. After the invasion, all employment possibilities were destroyed. During the first month, young Jews between the ages of 16 and 21 were taken for forced labor, but most of them were eventually killed.

In industry, wages paid to Jews were the same as those paid to non-Jewish workers. In the few years just prior to the invasion, the average wage was from 3 to 6 dinar per hour (8 to 16 cents). The work week averaged 40 hours; a license had to be obtained for overtime work, paid at time and a half.

No labor camps as such existed in Yugoslavia for Jewish workers in 1942-43, only concentration camps. Even of these, the majority were being liquidated and the remaining Jews deported to Poland.

Before the invasion, there were two kinds of labor unions in Yugoslavia; The Ujedinjchi Radnicki Sindikati (United Labor Federation), known as the U.R.S., and nationalistic labor organizations which differed in various parts of the country. Of the latter group, Slovenia had a Slovene Catholic organization, Croatia a Croatian Labor Party, etc. Although, during the first ten years of the existence of independent Yugoslavia, the labor unions had complete independence, increasing restrictions were subsequently imposed by the state authorities.

The agrarian reforms which were instituted in Yugoslavia after the First World War, and which divided the larger estates into smaller farms for individual farmers, almost eliminated the participation of Jews in Yugoslav agriculture. A small number of Jewish farmers and large-scale landowners remained. No Jewish agricultural cooperatives were in existence. In conjunction with the other confiscations, agricultural properties owned by Jews were also taken from them by the Nazis.

There were two large agricultural cooperatives in Yugoslavia, the Savez Srpskih Zemljoradnickih Zadruga (Federation of Serbian Agricultural Cooperatives) in Serbia, and the Seljacka Sloga (Peasant Union) in Croatia. A small labor bank existed in Slovenia; there were no large labor cooperatives.

There were three small Jewish cooperatives in Yugoslavia; one in Sarajevo; the Ezra, a cooperative bank for middle-class people and small traders, in Zagreb; and one in the Vojvodina.

The only government subsidy which affected the Jews of Yugoslavia was that given to the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities. The state authorities assisted the respective communities in raising the taxes which they were entitled to levy.

The major burden of general taxation in Yugoslavia was borne by the urban and commercial sections of the population, in which the Jews were most frequently represented. Only in this way did the Jews happen to bear a disproportionate, though not unfair, tax burden.

Jewish citizens had equal rights with all others. Citizenship could be applied for after ten years of continuous domicile in the country, but the Minister of the Interior could grant or reject the application without giving a reason. This possibility sometimes made it more difficult for Jews to obtain citizenship; during the period that Father Anton Koroshetz was Minister it was

almost impossible for a Jew to be made a citizen. Unequivocal rights to citizenship, except for reasons specifically mentioned in the law, was granted after 30 years of continuous domicile in the country.

The only stateless Jews in Yugoslavia were Polish refugees who had been deprived of Polish citizenship because of five years residence outside of Poland. These Jews, mostly refugees from Germany, were without passports, and had no recognized rights to remain in Yugoslavia. After the Hitler invasion all Jews were deprived of citizenship by special law.

There were no minority rights for Jews, no Jewish bureaus in the Ministry of the Interior and no office of Minorities.

Between 1918 and the Hitler invasion there were no more than 2 or 3 Jews in the Yugoslav Parliament (Skupstina) and Senate. The Chief Rabbi was an appointed member of the Senate.

Although the Yugoslav Jews were not notably active in political life, they were frequently represented in the municipal governments; in Belgrade and Zagreb there were Jews in the city council. The smaller towns sometimes had Jewish mayors.

Before the Hitler invasion, Jews served in all departments of the Yugoslav civil service; but largely as physicians, engineers and teachers. After the invasion, there seem to have been a few physicians retained.

There were Jews serving in the judiciary in many of the larger cities. Among those in Zagreb were judges Hoenigsberg of the Supreme Court, Gotlieb of the Court of Appeals, Hirshl of the District Court, Bozho Gruenwald, a District Attorney and I. Gold of the Magistrates Court. Judge Kerner was a magistrate in Gjurgjevac, Croatia. All these were ousted after the invasion. Except for Gotlieb, who escaped to Italy, and Gruenwald, who was in a concentration camp, the fate of the others was unknown. Under the puppet governments, the Jews had no recourse to the courts.

There was no discrimination against Jews in the Yugoslav Bar. Many Jews served on its executive committee, and a Jewish lawyer, Dr. Siebenschein, was for several years its president. Notaries had virtually the same qualifications as lawyers, and the same conditions regarding the Jews prevailed. One of the first measures to be instituted by the Nazis was the exclusion of Jews as lawyers. All the Jewish lawyers in Belgrade were sent to concentration camps in Kerestinec. No special lawyers were empowered to plead for Jews.

Within the Jewish community itself, the main division, on other than religious grounds, was between Zionists and non-Zionists. The only time that they opposed each other openly, however, was at community elections. The Yugoslav Zionists were in the majority and virtually controlled Jewish life. In addition to general Zionists, there were various labor factions, including the Histadruth, Hashomer Hazair, and Poale Zion. The New Zionist Organization (Revisionist) was not strong and had little influence. The Agudath Israel was also small and uninfluential. There was no specific Jewish communist group, although some Jews had communist views. All communist groups in Yugoslavia were illegal.

Jewish youth organizations were united in the Federation of Zionist Organizations, including all factions of the Zionist movement. They did a great deal toward training the youth for new occupations and supported a well-founded Hachshara (training) movement for Palestine pioneers.

Except for the Jewish community itself, in which membership was obligatory, affiliation with all groups was on a voluntary basis.

Among fraternal organizations, the B'nai B'rith, which had five lodges in Yugoslavia and a grand lodge with headquarters in Belgrade, was outstanding. It helped in the establishment of many social institutions and assisted the welfare work of other Jewish organizations. The first attack of the Nazis was against the B'nai B'rith.

There were also many charitable organizations and welfare institutions. Women were especially active in social welfare groups. One of the leading women's organizations in Yugoslavia was the WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization). Refugee work resulted in the creation of suitable organizations and institutions in Yugoslavia.

Except for religious holidays, celebrations were usually limited to events of importance to the Zionist movement, such as Balfour Day (May 1st) and the anniversary of the death of Theodore Herzl.

The general orientation of the Yugoslav Jews was determined by whether they were under Western influence or -- as in the case of the Sephardim -- more attuned to Byzantine cultural life. But the tradition which prevailed in all segments of Jewish life, and which included a strong religious ethical force, was the determining factor. Yugoslav Jews were known for their readiness to offer aid wherever needed, and to support communal and civic undertakings of all kinds. Comparative crime statistics showed a low percentage of Jews; in robbery, murder, rape and other crimes of violence, Jews were almost unknown. Where they did appear in crime statistics, it was usually under the classifications of fraud, larceny and various commercial illegalities. The use of alcohol was very uncommon, and the use of narcotics almost non-existent.

About 90 per cent of the Yugoslav Jews used the native Serbo-Croat language. Most of them knew at least one additional language: in Croatia it was German; in Vojvodina and Medjimurje, Hungarian; in Bosnia and in Serbia, Ladino (15th

century Jewish Spanish). The intellectual classes knew French. In the 1930's, the study and use of English became popular, many Jews joining English-speaking clubs. Yiddish was used by only very few Jews. Hebrew was popular among Zionist members of the younger generation.

The Jewish press in Yugoslavia was not well developed. A Jewish weekly, Zidov (Jew), was published by the Zionist organization in Zagreb in Serbo-Croatian and read throughout Yugoslavia. Sarajevo had a weekly, Jevrejski Glas (Serbo-Croatian). There was also a magazine Omanuth (Serbo-Croatian). All these ceased publication under Nazi rule.

Jewish participation in the ownership of the general Yugoslav press was small. A few Jews (mostly baptized) had some financial interest in two or three newspapers, but no editorial influence.

The general health service in Yugoslavia was extended to Jews and non-Jews alike. There was only one small Jewish hospital, in Subotica, a city in Vojvodina, later under Hungarian rule. A department of the Jewish asylum for the aged in Zagreb was also utilized as a hospital. Several private sanatoriums were managed by Jews in Belgrade, Subotica and other cities. After the invasion, the asylum for the aged in Zagreb, including the hospital beds, were seized; all the inmates were placed in barracks in a nearby village.

There was a high percentage of Jews in the health services of Yugoslavia, engaged chiefly as physicians, dentists, veterinarians and pharmacists. Relatively few Jewish women worked as nurses in Yugoslavia; the profession as a whole was not well developed and in many hospitals nuns performed nursing service. As physicians, Jews contributed a great deal to the development of medical science and health service in Yugoslavia, and were very much appreciated for it. Dr. Rabinowitz was physician to the King and the Court; Dr. Kohen, physician to the Queen, was subjected to a great deal of suffering at the hands of the Nazis, but finally escaped to London via Italy and Spain. Two of the best-known surgeons in Yugoslavia were Drs. Kostich of Belgrade and Gottlieb of Zagreb, both Jews, and General Dr. Mandel was one of the chief physicians in the army. Dr. Lavaslov Shick wrote a study of the important role Jewish physicians have played in Yugoslav history.

The only Jews who could work as physicians after the invasion were a few who were manifestly needed in small towns to fight disease, and in Bosnia, where no other physicians were available, to treat endemic syphilis. The number cannot be estimated because they were dispersed and working under miserable conditions, but it is known that many prominent Jewish physicians were killed in concentration camps. Most of the Jewish physicians in Bosnia were reported to have joined the guerrilla fighters.

Except for the physicians referred to immediately above and for the few who were considered indispensable in certain city hospitals, Jews were not admitted to practice medicine after the invasion.

Access to medical treatment was practically barred to the Jews after the invasion; medicine for the sick was obtainable only with the greatest difficulty and often secretly.

In pre-invasion Yugoslavia, vaccination against smallpox and immunization against other diseases was general in the cities; therefore almost the entire Jewish population was so protected. Vaccination against smallpox was obligatory in all the schools.

Health conditions for the Jews surviving in Yugoslavia in 1942-43 were extremely bad. They were doomed to starvation; in concentration camps, where 80% were estimated to have died for lack of medical aid, decimation continued from typhus, typhoid fever and other diseases.

Before the invasion, there had been no epidemics among Yugoslav Jews except influenza, followed by pneumonia. Sections which had been heavily populated by Jews during Yugoslavia's independence were largely in the cities; therefore the Jews were afforded the usual urban sanitary and hygiene protection. No ghettos were established after the Nazi invasion and consequently there was no special ghetto sanitation problem. Hygienic control over milk, meat and other foods was general throughout Yugoslavia and there was no danger of disease from spoilage. South Serbia had a kind of mosquito which caused dengue fever. Flies, fleas and lice were less common among the Jews than among the rest of the population.

The housing, bathing and toilet facilities enjoyed by the Jews in independent Yugoslavia equaled those of the rest of the population with a higher standard of living. Jews were known to have spent about 1/3 of their income for good apartments with facilities as modern as were available.

Birth statistics for the Jewish population of Yugoslavia before the invasion are not available; after the invasion births virtually ceased.

Mortality statistics are equally unavailable, but the rate among Jews was known to be relatively low, because of their higher living standards and more rigid hygienic observance. Deaths among Jews were most frequently caused by angina pectoris, pneumonia, diabetes, cancer and tuberculosis; diphtheria and scarlet fever were causes among children.

The net loss in the Jewish populations of Yugoslavia between the invasion and the middle of 1943 could probably be estimated at about 50,000; the remaining 30,000 include those still living in concentration camps or in points of deportation.

Sterilization and liquidation of incurables was not practiced on Yugoslav Jews after the invasion.

Social reforms established in independent Yugoslavia included compulsory social security and unemployment insurance, a 40-hour labor week, aid for small farmers, the expropriation and distribution of large farming estates, a system of public sanitation and public health institutions, free hospitalization for the poor, etc. Jews shared the privileges of all Yugoslav citizens in these respects.

Relief and public assistance was provided for old age as well as for the unemployment and medical care mentioned above. No discrimination was apparent in the distribution of any kinds of relief. Beginning with 1940, however, some tendency to avoid the employment of Jewish physicians in social security institutions was noticeable.

Jews were exceedingly active in the support of non-sectarian welfare institutions. Prehrana (Merisa), Uboski Dom (Home of the Poor), and Covjecnost (Humanity) -- all well-known organizations in Zagreb -- were under the chairmanship of Jews at one time or another.

There were many Jewish relief organizations. Every Jewish religious committee had a welfare department maintained from the budget established by the compulsory levy. All other organizations were maintained by private voluntary contributions. Considering the number of Jews in the country the contributions were very high. The amount spent on behalf of refugees after the beginning of the Nazi regime in Europe were so commendably high that the American Joint Distribution Committee and other welfare institutions expressed their appreciation. There were also organizations, largely maintained by women, for childrens' camps and other charities; student aid organizations, health organizations, organizations for productive retraining, and homes for the aged. The five lodges of the B'nai B'rith carried on a broad social welfare program. Government authorities cooperated with the various groups, but gave no financial assistance.

The following were some of the leaders in Jewish welfare work in independent Yugoslavia: Chief Rabbi Dr. Isak Alkalay, head of the Federation of Religious Communities in Yugoslavia, who was living in New York in 1943; Aleksa Klein, Secretary of the Jewish religious community in Zagreb, who escaped to Italy; Otto Heinrich, vice-president of the Zagreb community, who escaped to the United States; Dr. Drago Rosenberg, also vice-president of the community; Dr. Makso Pscherhof, president of the Refugee Committee, who escaped to Italy; Dr. David Furman, who led the retraining program; Julije Fischer, last president of the B'nai B'rith, who went to Palestine; Dr. Paul Neuberger, vice-president of the B'nai B'rith, who came to the United States; Dr. Richard Bauer, also its vice-president, who went to London; and Riki Kohn, head of the Palestine Bureau in Zagreb, who went to Italy. Most of the welfare workers were killed, died in concentration camps or were deported.

All private relief work among the Jews in Yugoslavia had practically ceased by the middle of 1943.

The general juvenile court and probation system in Yugoslavia concerned the Jews very little, because of the almost non-existent percentage of Jewish juvenile delinquency. Nor were there any but a nominal number of Jewish illegitimate children.

Recreation for children was privately provided. The Jewish communities maintained kindergartens and various other recreational facilities. The Maikabi, a well-organized sports organization, had separate sections for children. Various youth groups, especially the Hashomer Hazair, maintained summer camps. In Zagreb a special welfare group, the Ferijalna Kolonija, sent poorer children to the seashore and to the mountains for vacations.

About the only child welfare accomplishment in 1943 was the sending of about thirty Yugoslavian children to Palestine.

Until October, 1940, when a law restricting the admission of Jews to high schools and universities was promulgated in Yugoslavia under German influence, there were no restrictions whatsoever in the Yugoslav school system. The educational system was free and progressive, and the curriculum was also devoid of any racial or religious discrimination. After the invasion, racial discrimination was introduced according to the Nazi tenets.

In independent Yugoslavia, there were a number of elementary Jewish schools supported entirely by the Jewish religious communities, without state subvention. These elementary schools, employing about 100 teachers, had four grades and were recognized as public schools by the state educational system. There were no Jewish high schools, but students in the public high schools were obliged to take religious instruction. There were several Yeshivath (rabbinical seminaries) in the country, and a school for cantors in Sarajevo. No statistics are available for the number of Jewish students in any branch of the school system. After the invasion, all educational possibilities for Jews were eliminated.

There were a certain number of Jews serving in the Yugoslav school system as elementary and secondary school teachers, but the percentage was not remarkable. The requirements for appointment to the elementary school system were graduation from high school and a three to four year course in pedagogy. High school teachers had to be university graduates. Education was on a nationalistic, patriotic and classical basis.

After the invasion, teachers were selected for political and party standing, so that education dropped to a low standard. German schools for the German natives (Volksdeutsche) were established and were frequented by other children as well. Hatred for the Jew and mutual hatred between Serbs and Croats were propagated in all the schools under Nazi influence.

There was no specific anti-Semitic party in Yugoslavia. Several groups, financed by the Nazis, carried on increasing anti-Semitic propaganda, but had little influence on the democratically-minded people of the country. Zbor, a movement headed by Dimitrije Ljotich, was clearly fascist and included anti-Semitism in its program, but it made little headway and had no representatives in parliament. A group centered around the Zagreb newspaper Hrvatska Straza (Croatian Guard) was more successful because it operated in Croatia, where German influence had always been stronger than elsewhere in Yugoslavia. The Pavelich movement in Croatia, also called the Frankovci or Frank party, and eventually

known as the Ustashi, was led by Ante Pavelich from Italy. As German power and influence increased, the anti-Semitic incitements of this group made some progress, although the movement remained illegal. Anti-Semitism had some sympathizers among reactionary intellectuals and the middle-class. From these groups were subsequently drawn the supporters who aided the quisling Pavelich when -- after the invasion -- he was made head of the puppet government.

Before the Hitler attack, the Catholic clergy in Yugoslavia, generally speaking, was tolerant and liberal. A small group of clergy, however, and some Catholic associations, especially in Croatia, were openly anti-Semitic. The Hrvatska Straza, organ of the clerical Catholic party, often published reactionary and anti-Semitic articles. Although the official clergy did not participate in these actions, they took no steps to suppress them. After the invasion, the Archbishop and the higher clergy were friendly and helpful toward the suffering Jews, saving many lives and trying to obtain relief. On the other hand, Catholic priests in some instances served as local leaders of the Croatian quisling party, Ustashi, and were guilty of many persecutions. Some were responsible for excesses against the Jews in provincial towns.

Friendliness and tolerance toward the Jews marked the attitude of the Yugoslav people, especially in Serbia. When, under German pressure, the Yugoslav government in October 1940, promulgated a law restricting the admission of Jews to high schools and universities, non-Jewish students and even professors participated in public protests and threatened to go on strike.

The attitude of the government was similarly friendly and the equality of the Jews granted in the Constitution was vigilantly safe-guarded. However, with the growing Nazi influence of Europe, some restrictions against Jewish refugees were instituted. These had been introduced by the Minister of the Interior Koroshetz, a Slovenian Catholic priest, and sanctioned by the majority of the Council of Ministers.

In October, 1940, insistent German demands resulted in the introduction of three anti-Jewish laws in Yugoslavia. These were: (1) A law prohibiting Jews to deal in food articles; (2) the law restricting the admission of Jews to secondary schools, technical schools, and universities; (3) regulations regarding the transfer of business enterprises and stocks owned by Jews.

Before the Hitler invasion, unofficial discrimination against the Jews was virtually non-existent.

With the establishment of the Pavelich puppet government in Croatia, and the rule of the Ustashi guards and the Gestapo, the vicious instinct of the very scum of the Yugoslav population was released. In addition, there were many who, to further personal interest or to please the new Nazi masters, joined in the attacks on the Jews. Generally speaking, the attitude of the urban populations was worse than that of the peasants.

In Serbia the population behaved itself better, except for a few officials and others in the service of the invaders. There were reports of non-Jews helping Jews wherever they could.

Under Nazi rule, legal discriminations against the Jews covered every aspect of life, leaving no room for extra-legal discrimination, except insofar as legality itself was extended to justify pillaging, torture, and ruthless murder.

There was no special legislative department for the Jews of Yugoslavia under the Nazi regime. A special section set up in the police department eventually became obsolete, because there were no more Jews to deal with. This department, under the direction of the Gestapo, excelled in the usual cruelties. Its notorious head was Eugene Kvaternik, son of Marshal Kvaternik.

The puppet government of the "Independent State of Croatia" imposed a collective contribution of six hundred million dinar in gold (\$16,000,000) on the Jews. Subsequently it was raised to 800,000,000 dinar and finally to 2,000,000,000 dinar. To collect this tax, a committee for self-taxation was chosen to submit a list of individuals and their respective financial possibilities. The Jews who were not assessed were regarded as hostages. Most of them were imprisoned without a hearing, and released only when they and their families had been stripped of their last possessions and valuables. All this plundering, however, did not raise more than 900,000,000 dinars (\$24,000,000).

The Jews in Yugoslavia had to pay 100 dinar (About \$3) apiece for the Star of David badge.

The collections extracted by the Nazis after the invasion could hardly be called taxation. They simply took everything the Jews had. Jews who were leaving their homes were permitted to carry along only a minimum number of personal habiliments, such as one shirt, one pair of stockings and one handkerchief.

A decree prohibiting the free disposition and transfer of Jewish property was promulgated in October, 1940.

After the invasion, all bank deposits owned by Jews were confiscated. In the beginning, it was possible to withdraw small amounts for living expenses. Because of exchange regulations which had been in effect earlier, and which had prevented the transfer of money or stock without special permission from the Yugoslav National Bank, the greater part of the assets loaned by Jews fell into Nazi hands.

All Jewish enterprises were put under the control of commissars; their signs and stationery had to contain the legend: Jewish enterprise. As the owners were imprisoned, deported or killed, these enterprises became "Aryanized"

through sale and transfer by the authorities. There was no special "Aryanization" corporation. The process was practiced with special speed in Croatia, although Serbia, Bosnia and other parts of the country achieved the same results somewhat more slowly.

There were many Jews in the insurance business in Yugoslavia, but after the invasion they were ousted from this as from all other occupations. No special rules prevailed regarding insurance policies owned by Jews, but new policies could not be obtained by Jews nor could they collect insurance claims on old policies. Since most of the insurance companies in Yugoslavia were affiliates of British, French and Italian corporations, recovery of claims may be possible after the war.

Jews were not active as motion picture producers in Yugoslavia. They were engaged in distribution, and some of the theaters were owned by Jews. After the invasion, all these enterprises were taken over by German commissars; it was reported that Franjo Gundrum, known as an admirer of Hitler, was made commissar for the motion picture theaters of Zagreb. The presentation of German propaganda films was at once instituted. Among the first to be shown were "Jew Suss" and "Baptism by Fire", the latter dealing with the invasion of Poland.

No special Nazi or quisling police departments were detailed for Jews, but in the first few months after the invasion special referees handled Jewish affairs in the police department. No special qualifications were necessary for those chosen to serve in the police force under the Nazi regime; they had only to be followers of the new regime and ready to work under Gestapo orders. They were of low moral standing and the program instituted against the Jews demanded plunder and elimination.

Sometimes five different authorities were empowered to handle Jewish affairs after the invasion; the regular police, the Jewish referees, the Gestapo, the Ustashi, and the Ministry of the Interior. They vied with each other to see who could achieve greater severity and cruelty. The Gestapo came to Yugoslavia wearing the same uniforms they used in Germany. The Ustashi had military uniforms, including a cap marked with the letter "U". The regular police were given new insignia for their uniforms.

Jews, like other citizens, participated in the voluntary fire departments in independent Yugoslavia. No specific rules regarding protection were instituted after the invasion.

Immediately following the invasion, Jews had to register with the police for the yellow Jewish badge for which they had to pay 100 dinars (about \$3). Disobedience was punishable by concentration camp. There were no other identification cards.

Certain areas in all the cities were declared barred to the Jews, and Jews living within these areas often had to move out of their apartment at an hour's notice, leaving all the furniture. Jews were also barred from cafés,

restaurants, motion picture and other theaters and public parks. Violation of the law was punishable by concentration camp or death.

A general curfew was established throughout Yugoslavia after the invasion. In Belgrade anyone found on the street after 7 p.m. was shot; in Zagreb the curfew hour was 6 p.m. Jews did not dare to leave their homes even during the permitted hours.

Under Nazi rule, the death penalty was imposed for the possession of fire arms, explosives or ammunition. This applied to the whole Yugoslav population.

Immediately after the invasion, the Jews were deprived of their citizenship, and thereafter could not obtain passports. There were occasional exceptions; some Jews, after paying substantial contributions, were given passports for Italian-occupied territory. In April and May of 1941 the passports still bore no distinguishing marks, but afterward a "Z", standing for Zidov (Jew) was stamped on them.

After the invasion, Jews were not permitted to travel on railroads without special permission, but as stated above, bribery often obtained for them the right to go to the Italian-occupied Adriatic coast.

The use of public highways became practically impossible for the Jews, because of the efficient ruthlessness of the Ustashi, who would have killed any Jew trying to escape via the public highways. From the very moment of the invasion, the use of busses or trucks was proscribed for Jews.

All motor cars and horse-drawn carriages owned by Jews were confiscated. Jews were not allowed to move from that part of the city where they were first allowed to live.

Waterways communication was also barred to the Jews after the invasion. Although no specific regulations regarding air travel were imposed, Jews could not get permission to engage in such travel or even to reach an air field.

Shortly after the invasion, all telephones in Jewish homes were disconnected. To use cable facilities special permission had to be obtained. All radios were confiscated within a few days. A Jew caught listening to the radio would face the death penalty.

The rationing program instituted after the invasion allowed the Jews only one-half as much food as the non-Jews had. They could not get milk, meat, and other staples. Marketing was permitted for them only after 10 a.m., sometimes only after noon, and they could buy what had been left by the non-Jewish population. Even these regulations were applicable only at the beginning of the Nazi regime; later it became difficult for a Jew to buy anything legally.

When the arrests of Jews first began, after the Nazi invasion, the majority of those arrested were taken to police prisons. But the number of prisoners was so great that they had to be put into temporary barracks and camps near the cities, including Belgrade and Zagreb. From here they were transferred to concentration camps. Jews from Belgrade and from Banat were sent to labor camps in Tashmajdan and Topovska Shupa. From Croatia they were brought first to the mountainous section of the Lika (Gospich); the youth were taken to a former factory building in Drnje, ostensibly for forced labor, but most of them were killed. Later, Croatian Jews were brought to the Adriatic island of Pag, where they lived in salt mines under terrible conditions. Another group was sent to Karlobag. These camps were subsequently liquidated, and half of the Jews and Serbs imprisoned there were reported killed and thrown into the sea.

There were large concentration camps in Jasenovac, in Nova Gradiska and in Hruscica. From Hruscica women were later sent to Lovorgrad. Other camps for women were in Gornja Reka and Diakova in Slavonia. All camps in Croatia and Bosnia were controlled and guarded by Ustashi, those in Serbia by German natives (Volksdeutsche) and some renegades.

Wooden barracks, without any protection against weather, provided the only living quarters in the camps. Food was at starvation level, there was no medical care, and no communication with the outside world was allowed. During a short period in 1942, some relief was achieved through the intervention of the Pope on the appeal made by the Association of Yugoslav Jews in the United States and the American Friends of Yugoslavia, but this did not last long. The Gestapo, the Croatian puppet government and the Ustashi party exercised supreme control in the camps in Croatia and Bosnia; the Gestapo and the renegade Nedich police in Serbia.

The inmates in the concentration camps were in no way criminals; the latter were confined in regular prisons. The Jews were imprisoned not as political culprits, but only as Jews. Juveniles and women were at first kept together with the men, then separated.

Officially, Jewish women could not be forced into prostitution by the Axis, because of the racial pollution laws. But in the concentration camps sexual violations and rape against Jewish women were prevalent. A report brought out of the camp at Hruscica, in Bosnia, by a woman who succeeded in escaping, told of unimaginable beastiality by the Ustashi guards. When some of the women were transferred to Lovorgrad, near Zagreb, examination by physicians disclosed the fact that nearly all of them were suffering from venereal disease, exhaustion and apathy. Many of the women in Hruscica and other Croatian camps committed suicide.

It is impossible to speak of an organized underground movement specifically among the Jews who remained in Yugoslavia, because of their dispersion and the control to which they were subjected. The guerrilla fighters previously referred to constituted the real underground movement.

The Jews of Yugoslavia, without exception, welcomed the overthrow of the Cvetkovich government, which signed a pact with the Axis on March 25, 1941. They approved the government of General Simovich, established two days later, and joined the armies with enthusiasm.

To Yugoslav Jews, the United States had always seemed the homeland of democracy and of equal rights. They studied American history and read American literature; during the World's Fair many Yugoslav Jews spent their savings in coming to the United States. They have always believed that the United States would be a determining factor in rescuing Europe from the Nazi yoke. Refugees who have succeeded escaping Yugoslavia report that this belief in the United States has grown even stronger.

There are no Jews in the Yugoslav Government-in-exile.

There are no special Jewish parties or groups among the Yugoslav Jews in exile. The association of Yugoslav Jews in the United States is not properly a group-in-exile.

There were very few anti-Semitic publications in independent Yugoslavia, and these had little influence. The Balkan, edited by Krsta Cicvaric in Belgrade and the Zagut Hrvatska Straza, edited by Dr. Janko Simrak, were openly anti-Semitic. Slobodna Hrvatska (?), edited in Belgrade by Dr. Ivan Cicak, was sponsored and supported by the Nazis.

After the invasion, the most important quisling journalists congregated around the Novo Vreme and the Hrvatski Narod in Zagreb. Among those in Belgrade, however, were Danilo Gregorich, editor of Novo Vreme and a known anti-Semite even before the invasion; Krsta Cicvarich, editor of Balkan; Grgur Kostich; Stefanovich, secretary of Novo Vreme; Milan Tokin; Stanislav Krakov, a pro-fascist of long standing; Dr. Bajkich; Predrag Milojevich; Ivanich; Dr. Spalajkovich; and M. Radulovich.

In Zagreb: Dr. Ante Budak, editor of Hrvatski Narod and ambassador of the puppet state of Croatia in Berlin; Dr. Janko Shimrak, editor of Hrvatska Straza; Ivo (?) Lentich, co-editor of Hrvatska Straza; Dr. Ivan Cicak, editor of the Croatian Stürmer paper, Slobodni Narod, now in Zagreb; Mirko Glojnarich, former collaborator of Hrvatski Dnevnik; Janko Tortich, director of the former Yugoslav newspaper agency Avala; Kloss, member of the staff of the former Morgenblatt; Ivo Malinar, editor of the former Jugoslavenski Lloyd in Zagreb; Dr. Filip Lukas, former president of Matica Hrvatska and a notorious racial propagandist; Drajach (?) the director of the Quisling Croatian trans-ocean radio station Rakovica; in Bari, Italy; Kovachevich; Bogdan; Dr. Vilko Rieger; Orshanich; Franjo Rubina; Stanislav Florio; Franjo Bupalich; Zidovec; Fuis. With the exception of the German Morgenblatt, all these publications appeared in Serbo-Croatian.

Both the Croatian and Serb puppet governments were openly fascistic and anti-Semitic. Among the anti-Semites best known even before the war were:

Serbia: Dimitrije Ljotich, president of the fascistic Zbor organization; Danilo Gregoric, editor of Novo Vreme; Krsta Cicvarich, editor of the anti-Semitic newspaper Balkan; Milan Achimovich, puppet minister of Interior; Dragi

Jovanovich, mayor of Belgrade under the Nazi regime.

Zagreb; Croatia: Dr. Ante Pavelich, leader of the Ustashi Party and chief of the "Independent State Croatia", Croatian Quisling; Dr. Andrija Artukovich, Pavelich's minister of Interior; Dr. Benzon, physician and first Croatian ambassador in Berlin; Dr. Koshak, minister for Pavelich; Dr. Josip Vragovich, director of the Zagreb police while it was under Yugoslav authority and later under Pavelich; Dr. Sarich, Catholic bishop of Sarajevo, responsible for the anti-Semitic excesses inspired by priests in Bosnia; Dr. Mile Budak, Vice-"Poglavnik", Croatian Ambassador to Berlin; Kvaternik junior, son of Croatian Marshal Kvaternik, and responsible for many cruelties during his regime as chief of the Jewish department of the Zagreb Police; Vladimir Kren, former colonel of the Yugoslav Army, who three days before the invasion flew to Germany with the plan of all Yugoslav secret air bases, and was later made marshal of the Croatian Air Fleet; Leonardo Grivicich, merchant, president of the Association of Friends of Germany; Dr. Ivan Andres and Dr. Frangesh, both former Yugoslav ministers; Dr. Filip Lukas, president of the Matica Hrvatska and a Croatian racist; Ivo Wenner, the Ustashi Mayor of the city of Zagreb; Dr. Buch, president of the Federation of the Hotel and Restaurant Owners in Zagreb; Dr. Ruzhich, former Banus of Croatia; Dr. Aleksandar Hribar, lawyer and member of the German Technische Union; Dr. Milorad Kozjak, lawyer in Zagreb; Dr. Mirko Lamer, former Secretary for commerce at the Croatian Banat, and later in the same position under the Croatian puppet government (perhaps in Switzerland in 1942-43); Dr. Marijan Drazich, lawyer and president of the Association of Friends of Germany in Zagreb; Dr. Boris Zarnik, professor at the University in Zagreb, and propagator of the "scientific" racial theory; Dr. Smokvina, professor at the University in Zagreb; Dr. Ivan Pernar, Zagreb politician, Janko Tortich, deputy of the Croatian peasant party, director of the Yugoslav News Agency "Avala", and reputed to be a Hitler spy; Dr. Vuko Mrshulja, Zagreb lawyer, later lawyer in Fiume; Dr. Vitomir Tordoni, Zagreb lawyer, fascist and anti-Semite. In the Zagreb Auto-Club, in the late 1930's, a group started to propagate fascistic, nazistic and especially anti-Semitic ideas. The most noisy were: Hugo, Velimir Vrankovich, and the Brothers Vernich. All these obtained good posts under the Nazi regime.

There was no anti-Semitic propaganda among Yugoslavs in exile, but some Yugoslav-American circles showed anti-Semitic tendencies before Pearl Harbor.

Since in 1943 communication with Yugoslavia was practically impossible, detailed information about the few Jewish leaders who had managed to escape with their lives and were still in the country can hardly be given. However, in June, 1943, the Vatican transmitted a letter stating that the Rabbi of Zagreb, Dr. Shalom Freiburger, the former president of the Jewish community there, Dr. Hugo Kon, and the vice president, Dr. Drago Rosenberg, were all still living in Zagreb, despite earlier reports of their deportation to Poland. Dr. Bukich Pijade, president of the Sephardic religious community of Belgrade, was believed still to be in the latter city.

A number of Yugoslav Jewish leaders escaped to other countries. In the United States, in 1943, were the Chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia, Dr. Isak Alkalay; Otto Heinrich, vice president of the Jewish religious community of Zagreb, who was serving as president of the association of Yugoslav Jews in the United

States; Dr. Paul Neuberger, once member of the executive of the Federation of Jewish communities in Yugoslavia and Zionist leader, who was vice-president of the association of Yugoslav Jews in the United States; Alfred Bondy, textile manufacturer; Milan Freund, paper manufacturer; Frances Hubert, banker; Roman Schmutzer, textile manufacturer, and Manfred Sternberg, distiller.

Dr. Adolf Weissmann, mining industrialist and former Uruguayan consul in Yugoslavia, was in Mexico. Dr. Richard Bauer, physician and former president of the B'nai B'rith in Zagreb, was in London. Among the Yugoslav Jewish leaders who made their way to Palestine are Dr. S. Steineler of Belgrade; Dr. Zwi Rotmuller, Dr. Joel Rosenberger, Lav Stern, Julije Fisher, of Zagreb; Mayer Weltmann of Novisad; Dr. Zigo Bauer of Sarajevo. Dr. Aleksandar Licht, president of the Central Yugoslav Zionist Organization, escaped from German internment to Italy, and was living as a civil internee in the province of Modena. Dr. Ziga Neumann, former president of the Keren Hayesod in Yugoslavia, and Aleksa Klein, secretary of the Jewish community of Zagreb, were also in Italy.

No relief personnel which might cooperate in post-war reconstruction was left in Yugoslavia in 1943. Organizations outside Yugoslavia which might cooperate include, in Palestine: the Committee of Yugoslav Jews, whose president is Lav Stern and whose former presidents were Zwi Rotmuller, Julije Fischer, and Dr. Meir Weltmann; in the United States: the Association of Yugoslav Jews in the United States of America, of which the president is Otto Heinrich, acting chairman, Dr. Paul Neuberger, vice president, Avram Judich and secretary, Roman Smutzer. The organization which was most intensively active before the war was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The Jewish agency for Palestine and the Hicem (Hias-Ica Emigration Association) may also be turned to.